

## THE IDEAL OF LIFE.

W. H. MILLER.

It was the poet Lowell who has said :—

"Greatly begin, though thou have time ;  
But for a line, be that sublime,  
Not failure but low aim is crime."

It is recognized by all modern psychologists that before we can have an invention the same must exist in ideality.

The mind of him, whose hand has constructed the thing must of a necessity have seen the mechanism in entirety in its parts, and the relation of each part to the others individually and collectively. His mind must see the work of each part and the manner, in which it does such work. When the inventor's mind sees the mechanism in this light, he is able to construct a piece of machinery that will startle the world, or it may revolutionize that branch of industry to which it pertains. It is needless for me to say that the inventor must have had an ideal creation. The ideal is of no intrinsic value to him. Let him carry into execution the project, and give to the world the real instead of the ideal, and he will receive the encomiums of the world. Let us observe that as was his ideal of a lofty nature so is the real. As his ideal stood in the scale of elevation so is his reward. We find that this is a truth not only in the mechanical line, but in all vocations or lines of work. Writers in all periods have given to us only that of which they had a conception. All literature before its advent into the realm of readers had existed in mind, or we may say that its origin was in ideality. Persons who visited the art hall in the Columbian Exhibition, if they possess any of the love for the beautiful, never tire of telling of the excellence and sublimity of the masterpieces there shown. It is told us that all these have existed in ideality ere they were a reality.

They tell us that the sculptor saw the production which gave him a world wide renown in the block of marble ere the chisel guided by an unerring hand removed the first tiny particle. The painter, saw upon the canvas, before the brush with its fantastic touches kissed the same, that painting whose sublimity is sung through the corridors of time for all ages. We may say that the reason of the great success of these persons was because they had formed an ideal, and strove for its attainment. Longfellow says :—

"Life is real, life is earnest,  
And the grave is not its goal,  
Dust thou art to dust returnest,  
Was not spoken of the soul."

The poet would have us to see that life is a reality, and know and feel that this reality does not terminate with death.

And that the grave is not the receptacle of the principle of life. A certain author has said :—"The world is a stage. Life is an act. Humanity is the actor. Each plays his part, then moves from the stage." To do our part well, it is necessary that we be cognizant of our act, in the world's great drama. It is required that we have an ambition to do our part well. The thing essential that we be successful is that we have a conception of our act, and the method of its accomplishment. We have before us the ideal of our life. Our hopes and ambition lead toward it. The energy of mind and body works toward it. It is the goal toward which we are running. To reach the height of our ideal we sacrifice all. The young person who has no ideal of life is surely worthy of pity. He, whose ideal of life is low or debased is in a deplorable condition. Such an ideal is criminal, when the environment is such that a higher is not only probable but possible. It is an imperative duty to have an ideal in life, that this ideal be high, and that we bend all our energy and strength to reach this conception of life. If this be our motto, and we reach not the maximum of our ideal we shall yet be praise-worthy.

Once on a time a young man was walking the streets of St. Louis. He was a stranger and without friends or money. Night came on but he had no where to rest for the night. The time for all good citizens to be at home had come. He must wander on the street. A custodian of the peace gently escorted him to the station-house. Here he was requested to abide for the night in the department for criminals, debauchees, and the scum of man-kind. One gaze at the scene and his righteous indignation was aroused. He flatly refused to sleep in such a place, and declared that he would either remain in the office or walk the street. This boy had a noble ideal of life, when he was asked to lower his ideal of life the noble spirit of the young man rose in rebellion. It is recorded that he became a noted lecturer and that he ascribed his success to his conduct on that memorable night. If our ideal of life is as pure as this young man's conception proved to be, if our ideal of life is as clear to us and as lofty as is the mental conception of the masterpiece which the sculptor sees in the block, or the artist on the untouched canvas, then we shall have a true ideal of life.

WE often pray for comfortable feelings instead of conformity to the divine will ; we would be put to sleep in our sin and sloth rather than startled into higher activities and more earnest seeking after God.

## MAY DEACONS PREACH AND BAPTIZE?

J. M. RITTER.

Wherefore brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. Acts 6 : 3. There seems to be a question among some of our brethren, whether a deacon should preach and baptize. Acts 8 : 38. We find that Philip, one of the seven deacons, baptized the eunuch and he was caught away by the spirit of the Lord that the eunuch saw him no more, and he went on his way rejoicing. After the death of Stephen, when the Christians were driven from Jerusalem, except the apostles, he preached the Gospel in Samaria with great success and wrought many miracles. From the midst of these happy scenes he was called away to labor in a distant spot, with a single soul ; but the Gospel light was carried by the Ethiopian eunuch into the darkness of Africa, and is supposed to have there enlightened multitudes. In the narrative of Luke, Philip is incidentally distinguished from the apostles. Acts 8 : 14-16. He preached the Gospel in the cities on the coast, from Ashdod to Cæsarea, where at a later period Paul and his companions were his guests for many days. Act 28 : 8-16. It is evident from the above scriptures that the deacon should preach and baptize as well as the minister. Why should there be any doubt or question about this matter, when it is so plainly demonstrated in the Acts of the Apostles? I do not believe that they must wait to be sent out on trial by the church, but we should go out and seek for new fields wherever it is needed, and where is there a place in all the world that the Gospel does not need to be preached to a dying people? Why ! nowhere can we go but we find sinners, and many thousand places that the people never heard of the Brethren church at all. Then why, I ask, in the name of God, do the Brethren hold their deacons back and not let them go wherever they wish to go? There is not one word to tell you that Philip had to wait till the church sent him out to baptize the eunuch. No, you read only that the seven were called, and that they laid their hands on them and immediately they increased, and nothing more of Philip is heard till you find him preaching Jesus to the eunuch, and they both went down into the water where Philip baptized him, and when they came up out of the water he was caught away by the spirit of the Lord, that the eunuch saw him no more, and he went on his way rejoicing.

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God's visits if gratefully received will be graciously repeated.—*Matthew Henry.*